



CONNECTICUT HEALTH EDUCATION EXCHANGE

Volume VII A newsletter about health education issues, especially HIV/STD and teen pregnancy prevention Spring 2003

The Connecticut Health Education Exchange



Welcome to the seventh edition of the Connecticut Health Education Exchange. This newsletter is intended to inform educators and other youth servicing professionals of local, state, and national efforts related to coordinated school health education programs, especially HIV/STD (sexually transmitted diseases) and pregnancy prevention.

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"If this nation is to be truly committed to leaving no child behind, then we must ensure that education policies candidly address those issues that affect the health and well being of students."

Brenda Lilienthal Welburn, Executive Director of NASBE

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Are CT Students Fit, Healthy and Eager to Learn?

Health is not just the absence of disease—it requires physical, mental and social well-being. Schools in CT are recognizing the importance of addressing student health to ensure students are ready and able to learn. Last year, three school systems piloted coordinated approaches to school health. These Coordinated School Health Programs or CSHPs improve health and ability to learn through families, communities and schools working together.

Children's health and education are compromised by risky behaviors like tobacco, alcohol and drug use, early sexual activity, lack of physical activity, and poor diet. Coordinated school health addresses such issues, promotes healthy choices, and positively affects school instruction, services, physical and social environments by integrating eight components: 1) health education; 2) school environment; 3) school nutrition; 4) school health services; 5) physical education; 6) counseling services; 7) staff wellness; and 8) parent/community partnerships.

A coordinated approach requires interdisciplinary and interagency collaboration at every level, but communities have wide variation in their resources, needs, institutions and individuals. For this reason CSHPs look very different from school to school. Below is a brief look at the programs in the three Connecticut pilot districts. For more information about how to help students be fit, healthy and eager to learn, go to www2.edc.org/makinghealthacademic or contact Cheryl Carotenuti, 860-713-6584, cheryl.carotenuti@po.state.ct.us.

Danbury Public Schools

Goals include:

- 1) Identify modifiable risk factors among students.
- 2) Develop a staff wellness program.
- 3) Strengthen current health-related activities and services.
- 4) Integrate academics with health-related activities and foster a broader understanding of nutrition and lifelong health.

Danbury began by partnering with UConn's Public Health

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Feature Teachers ~ Dawn Love & Maggie Meriwether



DAWN LOVE

The Connecticut Health Education Exchange would like to recognize and congratulate Dawn Love, school counselor at the American School for the Deaf (ASD) in West Hartford, as a co-feature teacher. Dawn began her teaching career as a sixth grade teacher in Thompson, Connecticut, and began working with the deaf in 1983. Her role as a counselor has enabled her to become involved extensively in HIV/AIDS education training and sexuality/health curriculum training.

In addition to being a member of the Coordinated Health Education HIV/STD Cadre of Trainers Program, educators who conduct HIV/STD prevention workshops throughout the state, Dawn coordinated the first HIV/AIDS fund-raiser last year at ASD. Bags of candy were sold with HIV/AIDS fact cards attached as a way to increase awareness of HIV within the deaf community. This past fall, Dawn was instrumental in organizing a workshop on sexuality/health education for staff at her school.

Dr. Lisa Kuntz, Director of ASD, feels the school is “fortunate to have Dawn Love as one of its health educators. With her unique background in deafness, teaching, and school counseling, Dawn has been able to provide enthusiastic, well organized and informative training to staff and students. The school congratulates her for her ongoing efforts and on this recognition of excellence.” Harold Vrenna, Chairperson of A.I.D.S. and also a counselor for the deaf at the Connecticut Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired, recognizes that “this is a population that does not have access to mainstream media and health awareness education” and “Dawn’s contributions have been extremely helpful in providing deaf students with access to critical health information.”

Dawn enjoys “the excitement and enthusiasm that these challenging issues generate and the thrill of seizing those teachable moments.” She is dedicated to providing not only students but also staff at her school with access to education about sexual health and responsible sexual behavior, particularly information about HIV/AIDS. The most challenging part of her job is “increasing the comfort level in the area of sexuality and health in order to advocate for the continued and ongoing comprehensive health education within the curriculum.”



MAGGIE MERIWETHER

The Connecticut Health Education Exchange would like to recognize and congratulate Maggie Meriwether as a co-feature teacher. Maggie has taught health education at the elementary, middle, and high school levels and is currently a health educator at Ridgefield High School.

Maggie has conducted health and wellness related workshops and presentations at the local, state, and national levels and is instrumental in several state level initiatives. She is currently a member of the Coordinated Health Education HIV/STD Cadre of Trainers Program, is the contributing editor of the Connecticut Health Education Exchange newsletter, and has been a state representative for the national Health Education Assessment Project. Maggie has presented workshops on HIV/STD prevention at the Connecticut Association of Health Physical Education Recreation and Dance (CAHPERD) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Leadership Conference.

Maggie enjoys “making a difference in a teen’s life” and believes that it is essential for teachers to be “personable and be able to relate to what teens are going through and not to trivialize their issues.” Maggie believes that the most challenging thing about teaching health education is “relating to students about health issues while respecting the diversity of values and attitudes” and “helping teens set personal boundaries and negotiate decisions.” She strongly believes that family and community involvement is very important in addressing health and wellness. “Building school, family, community partnerships are essential to teens’ health. If healthy messages are not reinforced in the family and community we don’t see consistency in the behavior of teens.” Dr. Joseph Ellis, Principal of Ridgefield High School, adds that “Maggie has brought a mature professionalism to the field of health education. She is an innovative health educator who gets students excited about the health field.”

The Connecticut Health Education Exchange would like to thank Dawn and Maggie for their dedication in promoting health and wellness to their students and school communities. Dawn and Maggie will receive a Coordinated School Health Programs T-Shirt. Previous “Feature Teachers” include Lori Hart from Milford, Darlene Platt from Norwich Technical School, Ann Marie Colebrook from Newington, Vic Neumann from Hartford, and Kelly Ann Stokoe from Farmington.

Do you know an outstanding teacher in the field of health education? If you would like to nominate a fellow professional or yourself to be highlighted in our next issue, please fill out the enclosed form and send it to the contributing editor by August 29, 2003 for our fall issue. The nominee must be an active classroom teacher. Let’s take time to honor and recognize the high quality educators with whom we work each day!

Feature Program

Berlin High School UpBeat Peer Leadership Program

Mission Statement

"Berlin UpBeat is a school and community early intervention and prevention program. Our goal is to encourage the youth of Berlin to avoid the dangers of drugs and alcohol, to develop sound decision making skills, and to provide opportunities for positive community involvement."

The Berlin High School "UpBeat Peer Leadership Program" builds and sustains school community partnerships in a long-lasting and innovative way. Each year, members of the peer leadership program plan and implement over 25 school and community service projects. One group of peer leaders attended a special training program at The Hospital For Special Care in New Britain, in order to work with patients on the Traumatic Brain Injury Ward. After completing this training, the peer leaders volunteer to work with patients on the Neurobehavioral Unit. The peer leader volunteers also go to the hospital weekly and work to plan and implement various projects and programs in the community throughout the year, including plays, and the town-wide picnic. Over 5,000 people attended the picnic last year.

The program began in 1988 and provides trainings, programs, and activities for students, faculty, and community members. Teams are formed in each school level, and also include a team from the Berlin Police, a Community Team, and the High School Peer Leaders Team. Peer Leaders attend biweekly meetings, and must participate in the planning and implementation of community service projects throughout the year. The Peer Leadership Program is the largest club in the high school and assists with dozens of projects within the



Members of the "UpBeat Peer Leadership Program" participate in a teambuilding activity

school and community. Individuals generously donate their time, money, and/or services to keep the program moving forward. Congratulations to Berlin High School and the UpBeat Peer Leadership Program!

Examples of Programs:

- Car Crash Re-Enactment
- Educational Puppet Programs
- Adult Training Weekends
- Town Picnic
- Elementary School Tutoring
- Parenting Workshops

Anyone wanting more information about this program should contact Alice Mitchell at 860-828-6577.

Association of School Nurses of Connecticut (ASNC) Annual Awards

Kathleen Marsan, RN, of the Southington School System, has been chosen as the ASNC School Nurse of the Year for 2003. She initiated the Open Airways in Schools program at her school, developed the EpiPen Training program for her system, and was chosen as a NASN candidate to attend the EPS's Asthma and Allergy Conference in Washington, D.C. this past summer.

Leah Turner, RN, MSN, NCSN, Supervisor of School Nurses for the Norwalk Public Schools System, has been selected as ASNC Supervisor of the Year for 2003. Nominated by her staff nurses, Leah is described as a leader who has done an outstanding job of coordinating and managing 21 schools in Norwalk since 1989. Prior to being a supervisor, she was a school nurse for the Board of Education in Norwalk and worked for Head Start.

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program and establishing a Community Health Team with representatives from area hospitals, community agencies, and public health groups. Recognizing the importance of parent and community involvement, parents, students and community members participated together in activities such as Don't Laugh at Me training, Great American Smokeout talks by local physicians, and National Trails Day.

Granby Public School

Goals include:

- 1) Create and maintain a positive school environment.
- 2) Implement an effective health and wellness program involving all of the learning community.
- 3) Provide appropriate services for physical, emotional and mental health.

A Governance Team, including school members, community members, and parents, provides oversight and guidance. Character education is a focus in all schools. Granby

developed a five-year strategic plan for health and wellness, and a wellness program for staff.

New Haven Public Schools

Priorities were based on the results of a survey of each community. The district started by focusing on three schools:

- Elementary—nutrition, staff wellness/mental health, school environment
- Middle—physical education, nutrition, parental involvement
- High—staff wellness, school environment, nutrition

New Haven's initiative is supported by its School-Based Health Clinics. A district-wide school health committee provides assistance and advice, and a district-wide coordinator promotes consistency. Healthy snacks introduced were embraced by students, and other benefits include improved communication between disciplines and departments, and between parents and food services. The team uses newsletters, a website and bulletin boards to link the entire school community to health programs and information.

Resources

- ◆ *Developing Adolescents: A Reference for Professionals.* The document just released by the American Psychological Association, synthesizes the latest research-based information on basic, healthy adolescent development. Publication is free (single copy only) — send an E-mail request to publicinterest@apa.org.
- ◆ BAM! is brought to you by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). BAM! was created to answer kids' questions on health issues and recommend ways to make their bodies and minds healthier, stronger, and safer. BAM! also serves as an aid to teachers, providing them with interactive activities to support their health and science curriculums that are educational and fun. To explore this site go to www.bam.gov/.
- ◆ "The Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) identifies a trend of decreasing sexual risk behaviors among high school students in the United States for the decade 1991-2001. To examine changes during this period, CDC analyzed data from six national Youth Risk Behavior Surveys. The MMWR report summarizes the results of this analysis. Download this article at www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5138a2.htm.
- ◆ Connecticut State Department of Education has posted a brochure entitled, "Sexual Harassment in Schools—A Handbook for Students." Download a copy at www.state.ct.us/sde/dtl/cert/titl9/titl9a5.htm.
- ◆ The State Education Standard, a journal published by the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE), dedicated the Autumn 2002 edition to "Fit, Healthy & Ready to Learn! Linking Student Health with Achievement and Lifelong Success." Featured articles include:
 - "Education Reform and the Goals of Modern School Health Programs" (Kolbe, 2002)
 - "School Connectedness: The Untapped Power of Schools to Improve the Health of Teens" (McNeely, 2002)
 - "Creating a Healthy School Nutrition Environment" (Stauss, 2002);
 - "Sex Education Today: Current Practice, What Parents and Students Want, Policy Trends" (Witt, 2002)
 - "So You Want Higher Achievement Scores? It's Time to Rethink Learning Supports" (Adelman & Taylor, 2002)To download copies of these articles, visit NASBE website at www.nasbe.org/standard/PAST.html.
- ◆ The Coalition of National Health Education Organizations has established a website called "The Health Education Advocate" that contains advocacy alerts, federal legislation, testimony, fact sheets, and other public policy tools for health education and health promotion professionals. The website address is www.healtheducationadvocate.org.

The Coordinated Health Education Cadre of Trainers

Dynamic Professional Development Opportunities

Planning for professional development workshops? We can provide innovative skills-based professional development in the areas of HIV/STD prevention at no cost with CEUs. The State Department of Education and the Department of Public Health, in collaboration with local school districts and community-based organizations have developed a Coordinated Health Education Cadre of Trainers (CHEC). The purpose of CHEC is to provide quality, interactive, skills-based professional development workshops that promote health-enhancing behaviors in youth. If you would like more information or wish to schedule a workshop, please contact Bonnie Edmondson at 860-713-6578. The following workshops are available.

◆ Teaching HIV/STD Prevention with Diversity in Mind

This workshop is designed for grades 6-12 health education teachers, nurses, or educators who teach wellness and prevention education. A workshop may be scheduled as an after school, half or full day professional development opportunity. The training is available in three or five hour sessions.

This workshop will include: discussion on issues of diversity in the classroom; demographics of HIV/STDs, and AIDS with respect to diverse communities; and strategies for being inclusive when teaching about HIV and STD prevention.

◆ Activities That Work: Innovative Ways to Address HIV/STD Prevention in the Classroom

This workshop is designed for K-12 health education teachers, nurses or educators who teach wellness and prevention education. A workshop may be scheduled as an after school, half, or full day professional development opportunity. The training is available in two, three, or five hour sessions.

This workshop will include: HIV/STD information update; data on youth risk behaviors; skills-based, age-appropriate activities for the classroom; and dynamic resources for teachers.

Programs That Have Credible Evidence of Effectiveness

Research-based curricula to address HIV/STD and pregnancy prevention

These individual workshops provide training on skills-based, research-supported curricula that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has identified as effective in reducing sexual risk behaviors that contribute to HIV, other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and unintended pregnancies. The primary goals of the programs are to improve instructional practices of classroom teachers and other educators and to provide them with the knowledge and skills they need to implement the various programs. Training in the following programs is available in a minimum of four-hour sessions.

◆ Making Proud Choices: A Research-Based Approach to HIV/STD and Pregnancy Prevention (School & Community-Based)

Making Proud Choices is a research-based program that has shown to have credible evidence of effectiveness in reducing health risk behaviors among young people ages 11-13. This eight-lesson module is designed to empower adolescents to change their behavior in ways that will reduce their risk of becoming infected with HIV, other STDs, and significantly decrease their chances of being involved in unintended pregnancies.

◆ Reducing The Risk (RTR): Building Skills to Prevent Pregnancy, STDs and HIV (School-Based)

This program is designed for grades 9-10, however it has been successful in middle schools as well. RTR is a 16-lesson curriculum that uses a skills-based approach to the prevention of teen pregnancy and protection against HIV and other STDs. Refusal skills, delaying tactics and negotiation skills are emphasized.

◆ Be Proud! Be Responsible! Strategies to Empower Youth to Reduce the Risk for HIV (Community-Based)

This HIV/AIDS prevention curriculum is designed for youth, grades 9-12 in higher-risk situations. *Be Proud! Be Responsible!* uses a series of interactive learning experiences designed to increase participation and enhance learning. The program is designed to teach young people to take pride in and responsibility for choosing responsible sexual behaviors. Skills to reduce risk behaviors and to increase self-efficacy and self-confidence are emphasized.



Bright Ideas for Classroom Activities

Toward Understanding HIV/AIDS

Adapted from Peggy Brick's "Teaching Safer Sex" and adapted from "Filling the Gaps, Hard to Teach Topics in Sexuality Education"

Objectives:

- Help participants evaluate messages they have received about HIV/AIDS, and people who have the disease.
- Identify the impact that HIV/AIDS has on a person.
- Identify ways a person who is diagnosed with HIV could find support.

Audience: Junior/Senior High Students

Procedure:

1. Distribute a 5x8 card to each participant. Explain that what they write on this card is confidential. They will not need to show what is on the card unless they choose to do so. Tell the class you will ask them five questions. Ask them to answer quickly, and write the first things that come to their minds, for these usually reflect their real feelings.
2. Read each question. Watch for students to finish writing their answers before asking the next question.
 - What are the first three words that come to your mind when you hear the word HIV/AIDS?
 - Think back as far as you can. What were the major messages you received about people who have HIV/AIDS? Can you remember any particular incidents? List three messages.
 - What are three ways you think life is different for someone who has HIV/AIDS?

- What are three major concerns you would have if someone confided in you that he/she has HIV/AIDS?
 - What are three ways people who are HIV positive or have AIDS can find support?
3. Divide participants into random groups of four or five. Explain they will have 10 minutes to discuss any part of the exercise they choose. Remind them that no one has to speak unless they want to, everyone should have a chance to speak, and to listen actively to each other.
 4. After 10 minutes give a two-minute warning and then call the participants back into one large group.
 5. Write, "I learned that . . ." on the board and ask students to flip over their cards and complete the sentence three times.
 6. Ask for volunteers to read one of their "I learned" statements.
 7. Ask for ways people who are HIV positive or who have AIDS can find support. Ask participants which of these resources would be most helpful and why. Have hotline numbers and community resources ready, especially for testing sites.

Modifications:

You can use this same format to discuss any other health education topic.

If you have a "Bright Idea" to share, please send it to the contributing editor.

Connecticut Health Education Exchange

Bonnie J. Edmondson, HIV Prevention Coordinator, Connecticut State Department of Education

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The Connecticut Health Education Exchange Nomination Form

"Feature Teacher" □

Great things are happening across the state in health / wellness education! Let's hear from you. Do you know an outstanding health educator that you would like to nominate as the "feature teacher" in the next edition of the Connecticut Health Education Exchange newsletter? If so, please fill out this form and return by August 29, 2003 to be considered for the fall edition. All nominees must be active classroom teachers.

Your name: _____

Your phone: _____

Nominee's name (if other than yourself): _____

School: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Describe in a short paragraph why this teacher is exemplary and should be considered as a "Feature Teacher."

All nominations will be considered for future editions of the Connecticut Health Education Exchange.

Submit nomination form to:

Maggie Meriwether, Contributing Editor

Ridgefield High School

700 North Salem Road

Ridgefield, CT 06877

Phone: 203-438-3785, FAX: 203-431-2891, E-mail: Mag8@msn.com

The Connecticut Health Education Exchange Nomination Form

"Feature Program"

Great things are happening across the state in health / wellness education! Let's hear from you. Do you know of an exemplary health/wellness education program/project that you would like to nominate as the "feature program" in the next edition of the Connecticut Health Education Exchange newsletter? If so, please fill out this form and return by August 29, 2003 to be considered for the fall edition.

Your name: _____

Your phone: _____

Nominee's name (if other than yourself): _____

School: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Describe in a short paragraph why this program/project is exemplary and should be considered as a "feature program."

All nominations will be considered for future editions of the Connecticut Health Education Exchange.

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